



Worship time:  
9:00 a.m.  
Adult Bible  
Study: 10:15  
a.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church and Preschool  
634 Alden Drive  
Auburn, Nebraska 68305  
(402) 274-4210  
Web: <http://www.trinityaubne.org>

June 2020 – July 2020  
Volume XXXV Number 3

# LABORS OF LOVE

## Congregational Goals (2019-2020)

- 1) Promote engaging relationships and connections in the community (esp. Trinity Lutheran Preschool parents) to share the saving love of Jesus.
- 2) Promote engaging relationships and connections inside the congregation to share the saving love of Jesus through collaborating and engaging the congregation into deliberate and intentional efforts and activities. .
- 3) Utilize, to maximum potential, the website to communicate with the community and the congregational members, allowing the boards to use the website to maximize the potential of completing their goals.



**SUNDAY SCHOOL THRIVES!** Check out the Sunday School link on our Trinity website for a sampling of creativity from our young students who have kept Sunday School alive and well from home over these past weeks!  
(Thank you, Vicki Ackerman, for posting the photos on the website!)

**Summer wiffle ball/devotions** during Sunday School time is planned again as soon as we are able to be back together. Everyone is welcome to play. Brad Johnson will lead.

Watch for start-up date/details!



## Directory Update

### CHANGE:

#### **NEW ADDRESS:**

Kendra McMann  
72603 624 Ave., Elk Creek, NE 68348

Chris Boden  
14909 Chateau St., Bellevue, NE 68123

Susan Bohling  
Westbury Heights Apts.  
2121 14<sup>th</sup> St., Auburn, NE 68305

Tyler Penfield  
PO Box 82, Brownville, NE 68321

#### **NEW PHONE:**

Vivian Oestmann – (delete landline)  
cell 402 470-1906

Brad & Merri Johnson –(delete landline)  
Brad cell 402 414-1292, Merri cell 402 274-7011

**If your family has any changes to address, phone number, etc. please make sure to contact the church office so you don't miss important communication from your church family!**

*Thank you to those who have submitted address changes so the church does not incur 'Address Correction' service charges from the US Postal Service when mail is forwarded!*

## Trinity Family Changes

### Deceased:

4/25/202: Jerry Oestmann

## June 2020–July 2020

### ELDERS

June	July
07 – John Ackerman	05 – TBA
14 – Doug Lueders	12 – Doug Lueders
21 – Jim Parrish	19 – Jim Parrish
28 – Rich Scotter	26 – Rich Scotter

### ORGANISTS

Sandy Wilson

### PIANISTS

Vicki Ackerman  
Merri Johnson  
Sandy Wilson

### ALTAR CARE

June	July
TBA	TBA

### ACOLYTES

June	July
07 – Desmond Chaney	05 – David Scotter
14 – Emma Ackerman	12 – Emma Ackerman
21 – Desmond Chaney	19 – Justin Meyer
28 – Austin Meyer	26 – Austin Meyer

## District News

Trinity’s Board of Stewardship is considering how our congregation can participate in the *Building Together In Christ for Mission Capital Campaign*. While renovation work at these ministry centers is now complete, the campaign to raise the needed funds for both projects continues. As of 2/11/2020, \$2,708,258 of the \$4.5 million needed has been received in gifts and pledges. Please watch for more information.

For more information about activities in the Nebraska District, please see [www.ndlcms.org](http://www.ndlcms.org).

## Circuit

When it comes to Covid-19, all of our Falls City Circuit congregations are doing what works best in their context to provide Word and Sacrament ministry to those in our care. Some are doing services with social distancing. Others are doing small group services for Holy Communion. Others still are doing outdoor drive-up services. Also, several of circuit pastors have reached out to members and others through social media services. It appears that all of our circuit congregations will be back to worshipping together in June.

There are 2 pastoral vacancies in the circuit at the present time. One is for St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, rural Elk Creek and the other is for the dual parish of Christ Lutheran, Nebraska City and St. Paul Lutheran, Weeping Water. The St. Peter’s congregation is advancing to the point of preparing Call Documents while they wait for a call list from President Snow.

Pastor Rathjen is serving as the administrative vacancy pastor for Christ, Nebraska City and St. Paul, Weeping Water. Several retired pastors are taking turns preaching and leading services at those congregations on Sunday mornings. A pre-call meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28th at Christ, Nebraska City at 7:00 pm.



## Choir News!

Choir is on summer vacation! Enjoy your time with family and all the favorite warm weather activities!



## Confirmation

When the restrictions on public gatherings began, we did not have classes together on March 18th, March 25th, and April 1st. Rich Scotter made arrangements so that we could meet remotely by way of Zoom Meeting on April 8th, April 15th and April 22nd. By doing that we were able to finish up our last unit for the year in which we studied signs and symbols of the church. We used a book called “Behold the Lamb”. The students took a test over that material on Wednesday, April 29th.

With restrictions on public gatherings having been eased a bit, we had a short last class of the year on Wednesday, May 27th, so that the students could bring the homework that they have not yet turned in. We still practiced social distancing when we got together.

The Lord-willing confirmation will be help on Sunday, July 19th during the morning worship service.



## Adult Bible Study

**Sunday Morning Study:** We are currently using a four lesson study called “Living Worship”. We are in the third lesson entitled “Fuel for Worship”. We are planning to resume this study on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. At some point, Lisa Rathjen will give a report about her participation in the Honduras Foro back in February and we will view/discuss the video of the presentation about Christian caregiving that Rev. Justin Hannemann gave at the circuit forum back in February.

**Longs Creek Study:** We are currently studying Esther 2, but will be on break until Longs Creek opens back up to visitors.

**Rooted in Christ:** As the Lord wants the faith of our children and grandchildren to be rooted in Him, so also He wants our faith as adults to be rooted in Him as the promised Savior. Colossians 2:6-7: *“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”*  
**Please make time to read, listen to, and learn God’s word in your weekly schedule—in worship, Bible study and devotions—as individuals as a family.**



One half percent (0.5%) of all qualifying purchases from Smile.Amazon.com can come back to Trinity Lutheran to help our Preschool mission! Purchases must be made by going to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com). On the home page of that site, put “Trinity Lutheran Church, Auburn” in the place where you can pick your own charitable organization. Please note: be sure to pick the Trinity Lutheran Church in Auburn, Nebraska. A link has also been established on Trinity’s website ([www.trinityaubne.org](http://www.trinityaubne.org)). Go to “Resources” and “Helpful Links”. Then click on

the Smile.Amazon icon. Or, you can use our unique charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-6037664>. If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Buman.

**Trinity Lutheran Church was issued a \$38.94 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile program activity between October 1 and December 31, 2019! Thank you to everyone who has been designating their shopping proceeds on Amazon.com to Trinity Lutheran!**

## Thrivent Choice

[Help make a difference!](#)

Thrivent Choice outreach program empowers Thrivent members to help strengthen their communities and change lives by designating Choice Dollars to Trinity Lutheran Church or Trinity Lutheran Preschool.

For more information about the Thrivent Choice program and Choice Dollars:

- Visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice).
- Call 800-847-4836 and say “Thrivent Choice” when prompted.
- Contact our congregational Thrivent representative: Charlotte Stelling (402 414-1017)

Thank you to Thrivent members who are already designating their Choice Dollars to help support Trinity Lutheran and its missions!

**Voters’ Meeting  
has been rescheduled:  
for Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at  
7:00 PM**

**To allow for better  
social distancing, we will meet  
in the sanctuary.  
Watch for the agenda and minutes  
to be posted!**



SUNMART®



*In the WORD...*

## DIRECT YOUR DOLLARS

Trinity Lutheran's Preschool participates in the "Direct Your Dollars" program offered by Sun Mart Foods and SpartanNash Company to help our local children have every possible advantage in their education. . When \$150,000 in Sunmart cash register receipts have been collected and sent in, the company issues a \$1,000 check.

Below is a picture of Vivian Oestmann holding our most recent check for \$1,000 from Sunmart. For many years, Vivian and her late husband, Jerry, have organized and tabulated the Sunmart receipts. Many thanks for their work to do so over the years!

Vivian intends to continue her work on the receipts even though Jerry is now with the Lord in heaven. She said that it took us 1 year and 10 months to collect \$150,000 in receipts. She is thankful for everyone's help with collecting the receipts. That includes the work of others outside of the congregation to help us collect the receipts. She estimated that about 1/3 of the receipts come from others.

Vivian's hope is that more members of Trinity will save and bring their Sunmart receipts to the box on the table outside the office, so that we can get to \$150,000 in receipts and to our next check more quickly.



**“Rooted in Christ”:** Here are some opportunities for members of Trinity to be in God's Word each week:

Parents, if you are not already doing so, take time to be together devotionally with your preschool through high school age children in God's Word.

You can do this with your children individually or as a family. After a meal or before bedtime works well. You can certainly use *Portals of Prayer* or some age-appropriate devotion like *Happy Times* or *My Devotions*. You can also use the format for morning and evening prayers as found in section 2 of Luther's *Small Catechism*. If you have questions, please contact Pastor.

- ✠ **“Rooted in Christ” Bible verse of the week:** Each week a Bible verse will be printed in the bulletin. Challenge yourself to commit the Bible verses to memory each week. Prayerfully consider how each verse applies to your life of following Christ in faith.
- ✠ **Portals of Prayer:** Copies of this devotional are on the table in the narthex and the rack in the Fellowship Hall.
- ✠ **Luther's Small Catechism:** You can use the Catechism devotionally by reading part or all of one of the six chief parts, and prayerfully considering what Martin Luther explained based upon God's Word.

### **2 Timothy 3:15 (ESV)**

...and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

### **Luke 18:16-17 (ESV)**

But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”



## ***Trinity Prayers***

*Following are some suggested prayers for you to offer over the next 2 months. Please incorporate these into your daily prayers as well as any other needs or concerns of others.*

‡ **Encouragement, strengthened faith and healing for those with long-term illnesses:**  
Raburn Benton (Todd's dad), Diana Birdsley (former member of Trinity), Leroy Caspers (friend of the Meyer family), Charles Haun (friend of Gary & Karen Kamtz), Craig Hoadley (Merri Johnson's brother-in-law), Presley Kieler (Kim

Kieler's great niece), Albert (friend of Paula Martin), Harold Moyer, Richard & Lola Schlichtman (Vicki Ackerman's father & mother), Steve Stangl (Laurie Clark's husband), Shari Stonacek (friend of the Kamtz family), Deb Woods (friend of Paula Martin).

‡ **For members of the Trinity congregation,** that with good news of the care that God has first shown us in Christ, that we grow in showing the same care for one another by what we say and do.



## **Trinity Lutheran Preschool**



**We are planning to restart Preschool in the fall, the Lord-willing. Preschool fall enrollment is happening now!** We already have 8 students enrolled. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

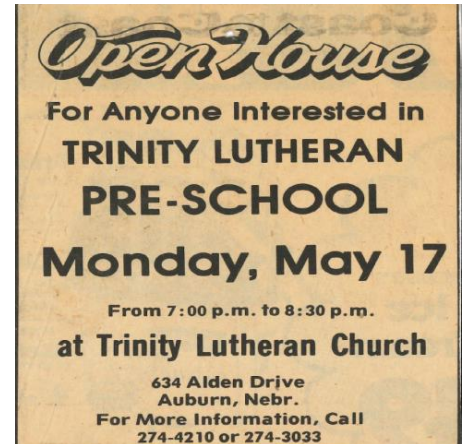
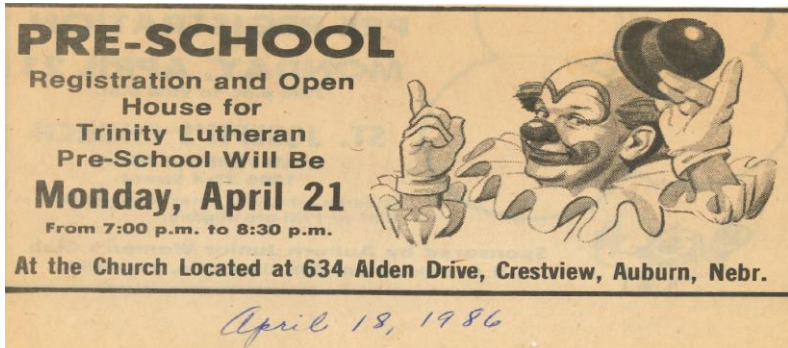
Please pass the word to young families you know.  
Information is on Facebook and on the church website.



## Grounded in Jesus, Solid in Experience

Like the faith that guides us, our history points us to a firm foundation of values based on God's Word, experience and caring practices.

The Preschool started back in January of 1982.



Our preschool is a place where children are encouraged to develop their God-given individual potential and talent in a Christ-centered setting. Since our beginning we have had 4 Pastors: John Denniger, Jeffrey King, Richard Snow and Jonathan Rathjen. Directors have included Ann Brueggeman, Wayne Dietrich, Julie Fritz, Kim Kieler and Melissa McClanahan. We've had a number of wonderful teachers and assistant teachers over the years, both from within the congregation and from the community. Classes have varied from as cozy as 9 to as expansive as around 40. There have been fun and informative visits from the Fire Department, B103 radio station's Bee-Mobile, as well as trips to the Pumpkin Patch and Pizza Hut. But underlying everything, are the daily lessons that teach basic skills such as language, songs and reading in a context that helps the children learn about Jesus.

**Fun, Learning and Nurturing of Young Faith... Come Join Us!!!**





# VBS

Save the Date! Trinity Lutheran Church will be hosting Vacation Bible School for one day on Monday August 3rd from 9:00am-1:00pm, with lunch provided.

Emily Crotty and Chantelle Wilke will co-direct. Watch for details!



## Honduras Update:

**Honduras Mission:** The Honduras Foro (mission forum) met on February 21-25 at the Humaya Inn in Comayagua, Honduras.

**Participants included the following:** Pastor Brian Roberts (St. Luke, Oviedo), Pastor Micah Steiner (Denver, Colorado, Our Father), Roldan Rios (Belize), Tom Fenstermacher (Faith Lutheran Viera FL) Rosa Castra Martinez, (La Paz), Pastor Herb Burch, (Area Facilitator LCMS LAC OIM), Lisa Rathjen, (Trinity Lutheran, Nebraska), Jana Inglehart, (LCMS Comms), Pastor Junior Martinez (La Paz, Misión Luterana, Missionary Pastor), Tulio Cesar Meza Mejia, (Deacon, Comayagua), Yemi Martinez (Director Lead a Child, Teacher) Alfredo Osaguera, (member, Comayagua), Kimberlin Zeron (Comayagua, active with youth, member), Cherie Auger, (Faith Lutheran, Stephenville Tx), Pastor Edmund Auger, (Faith Lutheran, Stephenville, Tx), Claudia Oseguera, member in Comayagua (sister of Alfredo), and Pastor Ted Krey, Regional Director for Latin America and Caribbean Region of the LCMS

**Here are some of the highlights from this meeting:**

- ✠ **Saturday:** Deacon Tulio Meza Mejia gave the opening devotion on Epiphany based on Matthew 2:1-3, John 2:7-11, and Matthew 3:16-17.
  - 1. Pastor Junior Martinez and his wife, Rosa, gave reports about the mission and ministry activities in La Paz. They discussed future plans to host two MOST (Mission Opportunities Short Term) teams to do eye glass clinics in La Paz in July, the Lord-willing. (Not sure if this these will happen due to Covid-19.)
  - 2. Pastor and Rosa Martinez are still dealing with immigration/visa issues because they are Nicaraguans living in Honduras. The hope is that these issues will be resolved when the Honduran government approves the legal paperwork to establish this new Lutheran church body in Honduras—Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Confesional de Honduras.
  - 3. A report was given about the progress on the construction of the mission property in La Paz. The property will have a 3-bedroom parsonage, an education wing and a sanctuary when finished. The property will also have its own well. The parsonage will be finished the Lord-willing by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Construction on the education building is set to begin by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Tom Fenstermacher, Woody McDaniel, and other members from Faith Lutheran (LCMS), Viera, FL, and Our Father Lutheran (LCMS), Denver, CO have been instrumental in this project.
  - 4. Pastor Herb Burch, LCMS Area Facilitator gave a report about other various mission efforts in Honduras by other LCMS congregations but who are not necessarily leaving a

Lutheran presence. He also talked about a new potential mission site in Choluteca, Honduras. A congregation there was founded in 2005 by Rev. Roldan and Ruth Rios. Initially, it was a congregation that had some connection with the Presbyterian denomination. They desire to join this new Lutheran church in Honduras. Needs in that congregation include catechetical teaching, leadership formation, pastoral formation, and materials for Sunday School and Bible school. A leader in that congregation has a 19-year old son who wants to study to be a pastor.

- 5. Lawyer, Freddy Padilla Meza, gave an update on the status of the legal paperwork to establish this new Lutheran Church in Honduras. The paperwork is complete and the only remaining step is to publish the documents in a newspaper. Ten days after the publication, the legal entity would be established and could publicly function. It was hoped the money to publish the documents would be received and the publishing could be done by the end of March. Freddy also reported on other responsibilities that would need to be done once the legal entity is established—filing of quarterly reports of income and expenses with the government, etc. He also talked about the costs/issues to establish legal residency for the Martinez family.
- 6. Deacon Tulio Meza and members of the Comayaguela mission site gave a report about the mission and ministry activities there. Yemi Martinez, who works with Lead a Child, talked about their activities. They presented 25 children, who have been with the program from the beginning, with backpacks. She also talked about the Saturday Christian Education Activities. Approximately 45 children are involved in that program. It started in 2013 and has grown. With the growth, the challenge has been that the costs of the program have also grown and are not fully covered by the budget.
- 7. A report was given about a young lady by the name of Yolany. She was identified by a visiting MOST Eyeglass team as someone needing extra medical care for her eyes because lye had been thrown into them. Through some gracious donations, she has been able to have a cornea transplant and has been receiving follow-up medications. Praise God for the work of the members of the Comayaguela congregation to care for this young lady!
- 8. A report was also given about the potential for another MOST team to visit in July as well as some physical needs for the church property in Comayaguela.
- 9. It was noted that Pastor Junior Martinez has visited Comayaguela and that there is good communication between the members of the two missions and a desire to do things together as opportunities allow. Alfredo, a member of the Comayaguela congregation emphasized the need for pastoral care and to regularly receive the sacraments.
- 10. There was a discussion about the need for funding a variety of education opportunities for church workers and for lay people. Some of that funding will come from the LCMS Office of International Mission and some from St. Luke's Lutheran (LCMS) in Oviedo, FL.
- 11. There was some discussion about Rev. Ted Krey coming to visit Trinity, Auburn at some point to discuss expanding support for Deacon Tulio and Pastor Martinez with new mission partners.

#### ✠ **Sunday:**

- 1. A divine service was held with Pastor Martinez leading the liturgy and celebrating following the Divine Service as found in *Cantad al Señor*. (This is likely the most common order of service used among Lutherans in Spanish speaking churches.) Pastor Herb Burch preached on the transfiguration and baptized two children, both pre-adolescents of the Saturday school. Some 40 people were in attendance. Alfredo and his family hosted the FORO in their home adjacent to the church and good fellowship ensued.
- 2. In the afternoon, a smaller team of individuals worked at the hotel on the decisions that had been made from the previous day in order to adjust the budgets for La Paz and Comayaguela to new realities.



✝ **Monday:**

- 1. Some of the Foro participants traveled to Choluteca to visit the new potential mission site there.
- 2. Others spent time in conversation and traveled to the Valley of the Angels area for sight-seeing and fellowship.

The next Foro will be held, the Lord-willing, September 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 in La Paz. Please keep the Lord's work in Honduras in your prayers.

- ✝ Thank Him for all of the wonderful developments that He has brought about.
- ✝ Thank the Lord for the people and congregations from many different places who are providing support for the work there in various ways.
- ✝ Pray that He will keep our brothers and sisters in Christ there safe and healthy and bless them with all that they need for their work and its challenges.
- ✝ Pray that He will bless the work on the education wing at the La Paz mission site.
- ✝ Pray that He will call a man to serve as a pastor of the Comayaguela congregation.
- ✝ Pray that He will bless the ongoing educational activities by Lead a Child and the human care activities by MOST Ministries.
- ✝ Pray that He will bring together the people and resources needed for developing health initiatives in and around the missions.
- ✝ Pray that He will bless the development of the Choluteca mission site.

**1 Corinthians 3:7 (ESV)**

*So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*

**John 4:35 (ESV)**

*Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.*



## **Give Thanks—Give Back:**

Trinity's Board of Stewardship started this new program earlier this year. Thank you to everyone who has given special offerings to thank the Lord for His many blessings. So far, a total of \$284 have been applied to the principle of the daycare loan to pay it off more quickly. The current balance on that loan is \$31,336 as of 5/27/20. If you have any questions, please see a Board of Stewardship member. Thanks!

**Psalm 136:1, ESV:** *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

## **Offerings During the Break Due to the Coronavirus:**

Thank you to Everyone who has been continuing to support the Lord's work in and through Trinity with your offerings! As we return to worshiping together on Sunday mornings, our offerings to the Lord will be received, but in a new way. Instead of passing the offering plates, a plate will be placed on a table in the narthex in which you may place your offerings before or after the worship service.

For those who will not be attending with us yet, you can continue to use any method below to offer your gift to the Lord:

1. Bring your offering to church and drop it by the office (or slip it under the office door if we are out).
2. Send your offering to the church through the U.S. Mail.
3. Go to the church website ([www.trinityaubne.org](http://www.trinityaubne.org)) and give your offering by way of e-giving.
  - a) Go to the "Resources" tab on the home page.
  - b) Go to the "Helpful Links" tab.

\*\*It is easy to do this, but if you need some assistance, you can call Tim Becker at 402-414-1931

*Thank you for your ongoing support of the Lord's work  
in and through the Trinity Lutheran Congregation.*



**American  
Red Cross**

*Together, we can save a life*

**Seeking Bloodmobile canteen coordinator for July blood drive.**

We need a coordinator by July 1.

Please contact Merri Johnson, 402-274-5217 or text 274-7011.

## "Connections"

Perhaps this time of social distancing has helped us grow in appreciating our connection with each other as members of the same congregation. What do you think?

When we first meet people that we do not know, it is common to try to find some connection that we might have with them. That might be a common place we've lived even though at different times. It might be a similar job. It might even be a church home that we've had in common or someone that we know from church activities. As the saying goes, "It's a small world...."



The people in the picture above stopped by the church one day awhile back. In talking with them, I discovered some connections that I think you'll find interesting.

When the picture was taken, this couple had been married about two weeks. The man in the picture is an LCMS pastor. His name is Bob Ziegler and he serves at Trinity Lutheran in Atchison, KS. He has been a pastor for about 61 years—most of those at Trinity.

The connection I have with Pastor Ziegler comes from about 4 years ago. The pastor from St. John Lutheran in Tecumseh was gone on vacation, and I was helping provide pastoral care (hospital calls, etc.) while he was gone. Pastor Ziegler's brother, who was a member of the St. John congregation, died during that time, so I was asked to do the funeral.

After the funeral, I visited with Pastor Ziegler during the lunch. I asked him questions about his time of serving at Trinity, Atchison. It was a wonderful conversation. One of the things that he mentioned was the challenging financial situation when he first took the call to serve at Trinity. The congregation was founded in 1866. It had (and still has) a Lutheran school. Because things were so tight financially at that time, he said that the congregation would sometimes need to pass the offering plate twice during a service in order to pay for the expenses for the church and school. Wow!

The woman in the photo is Charlotte. She has a connection with the Trinity, Auburn congregation. She was married to Rev. Leland Teuscher who served here at Trinity for two years beginning in 1958. My understanding from what Charlotte said is that this was the first place that he served as a pastor after graduating from seminary.

At that time, the Trinity congregation was worshiping in its first building--what is now the Auburn Berean Church at 1620 N Street. The building was much smaller then. During the time when Pastor Teuscher was here, the congregation celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Also, the Ladies Mission Society at Trinity joined the national Lutheran Women's Missionary League. If I remember correctly, Charlotte said that his next call after serving at Trinity was to a congregation in Wichita, Kansas. He died in March of 1989.

What connection did Bob and Charlotte have so that they got to know each other? They've known each other for many years from when they went to school together at St. John's Lutheran College in Winfield, KS. That was a two-year college that was operated by the LCMS from 1893 to 1986. It helped prepare future pastors and teachers with the classes they needed to go to seminary or teachers' college.

Bob and Charlotte were on an afternoon drive when I met them. They came to Auburn, so that Charlotte could see what Trinity Lutheran looks like now. I think she and her son had come back to Auburn for a congregational anniversary at some point before the new part of the building was built. I showed them around, so that they could see the newer part of the building and also older part with the preschool area.

In checking our church records, it appears that 6 of our current members were also connected to the congregation back when Pastor Teuscher and Charlotte were at Trinity in the late 1950s. Many others have come and gone in the time since. Some have moved to new places and joined different congregations. When we see them again, it's fun to reminisce about those times and our shared history together.

Though we may not see them all that often, through our faith connection with Christ, we share the same wonderful gifts with others who remain repentantly trusting in Him—His forgiveness, certain love and ongoing care. For those who have that most important connection with Jesus Christ through faith alone in Him as Savior, they also will get to see each other again in heaven. Then we will enjoy spending time together for eternity as we praise God from Whom all blessings flow for His grace and mercy for us sinners that has saved us. Then and there, in body and soul, we will enjoy in the fullest way God's promises fulfilled in and because of Jesus Christ.

There in heaven, we will enjoy the things we looked ahead to in this earthly life as we heard God's word together. That will be so wonderful! The last verse of the hymn "Blest Be the Tie that Bind" reminds of what we can look forward to in Christ alone. *"From sorrow, toil, and pain, And sin we shall be free And perfect love and friendship reign Through all eternity."* (LSB 649, Text: John Fawcett, public domain.)

Praise God the Holy Spirit for that faith connection with Jesus that He given us as a gift and through which we can be certain of that heavenly reunion for ourselves. Thanks be to God also for the people that He's used to bring His law-gospel word into our lives through which the Spirit has done His work to connect us with Jesus.

As we get to know people through various activities and events in our lives, I pray that we won't see those connections as only an earthly, shared experience. I pray also that you and I will keep in mind that most important connection that the Lord wants to have and continue having with them and all people. As we interact with people, whether in the congregation or outside of it, I pray that we do so with the goal of wanting to see them again in heaven. Knowing that the Holy Spirit works to bring people to repentant faith in Jesus as their Savior through His word, I pray that Spirit will grant us the compassion and the boldness to more consistently share that good news about Jesus with each other and others so that they along with us have that same faith connection with Jesus that means a common crown of life for ever.

God's continued blessings to you!

In Christ, crucified, risen and ascended indeed!

Pastor Jon Rathjen